

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 07074 132124Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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USIA FOR ILA, IPS

EO: 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP CO

SUBJ: REACTION TO BICENTENNIAL

REF: STATE 169682

1. THE MAJORITY OF REACTIONS TO THE BICENTENNIAL WERE EXHIBITED THROUGH THE MEDIA AND, EXCEPT FOR EXTREMIST PUBLICATIONS, WERE UNIFORMLY POSITIVE. SEVEN OUT OF TEN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTS DEDICATED TO THE BICENTENNIAL. THE OTHER THREE MAJORS, DOZENS OF SMALLER PAPERS, AND VARIOUS MAGAZINES INCLUDED SPECIAL SECTIONS CONGRATULATING THE U.S. AND CARRYING ARTICLES ON INSTITUTIONS, HISTORY, AND CULTURE. ALL SUPPLEMENTS AND SPECIAL ARTICLES CONVEYED A SPIRIT OF SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY INCLUDED USIS PROVIDED MATERIALS.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS HEAVY AND THOUGHTFUL. THE EMPHASIS WAS ON THE VALUE OF GOVERNMENT BY LAW, PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS, AND RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. IT WAS FREQUENTLY NOTED THAT WHILE THE U.S. HAS HAD PROBLEMS SUCH AS VIETNAM AND WATERGATE, IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO GOVERN IN THE U.S. AND THE VITALITY OF INSTITUTIONS WHICH PREDOMINATED OVER SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, COMMENTARISTS AVOIDED THE USE OF THEIR USUAL JIBES AGAINST THE U.S. FOR WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS U.S. NEGLIGENCE OF L.A., THE UNPOPULAR ASPECTS OF U.S. TRADE POLICY, AND THE CURRENT U.S. ROLE IN THE PANAMA CANAL.

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3. T.V. AND RADIO ALSO CARRIED NUMEROUS PROGRAMS ON THE BICENTENNIAL; ALL WITH A POSITIVE ORIENTATION. VOA AND LOCALLY PRODUCED USIS MATERIALS WERE PROMINENT.

4. THE COLOMBIAN ACADEMY OF HISTORY PRESENTED A SPECIAL "SOLEMN ACT" TO COMMEMORATE THE BICENTENNIAL, FEATURING AN ADDRESS BY THE HIGHLY RESPECTED FORMER PRESIDENT, ALBERTO LLERAS. ANOTHER FORMER PRESIDENT AND STILL ACTIVE POLITICAL LEADER, DARIO ECHANDIA, MADE AN APPEARANCE AT THE JULY 4 RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE CHARGE.

5. NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS FOR NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS DURING THE MONTH PRIOR TO JULY 4 WERE THE HIGHEST IN THE HISTORY OF THE CONSULATE FOR ANY 30-DAY PERIOD. MANY APPLICANTS INDICATED THAT THEY WISHED TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S. TO VIEW THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS AT CLOSE HAND.

6. ALTHOUGH THE BICENTENNIAL WAS AN ATTRACTIVE OCCASION FOR TERRORIST ACTS AND OTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF ANTI-U.S. SENTIMENT, NO NEGATIVE INCIDENTS RELATED TO THE U.S. NATIONAL FESTIVITIES WERE REPORTED.

DREXLER

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Message Attributes

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